



PRESS RELEASE

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State Praises Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in honor of Grandparents Day Observance

*Dept on Aging offers services to support grandparents providing a stable
environment for their grandchildren*

SPRINGFIELD – September 7, 2012. Illinois Department on Aging Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., today gave praise for special grandparents in honor of this Sunday, September 9, Grandparents Day observance. Director Holton was referring to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren or other relatives.

“On this Grandparents Day weekend, I want to say an extra thank you to grandparents taking on another round of parenthood. There are more than 200,000 children in Illinois who live in grandparent-headed homes, as more grandparents are serving as “primary caregivers.” And I want let you know there’s help with the physical, emotional and financial stresses that accompany raising another child,” said Director Holton.

A grandparent who is a primary caregiver lives with and is responsible for most of the basic needs of their grandchildren, ages 18 and younger. In Illinois, it’s estimated more than 100,000 grandparents have stepped up to be the primary caregivers for their grandchildren when the parents are unable to. The decision by a grandparent to raise their grandchild can be a difficult one whatever the circumstances. And for those with limited resources, an additional round of parenting can pose further stress on the grandparent.

The Department on Aging (IDoA) has a program to support grandparents providing grandchildren with a stable environment. The *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* (GRG) program helps with efforts to locate, assist and promote awareness of older caregivers, as well as other relatives, who are currently raising their family’s children. Created in 1996, *GRG* offers numerous services that may help during difficult times. The program provides referral services to local resources, such as support groups and legal assistance. And in some cases *GRG* provides emergency financial assistance for such needs as utility bills, medications, food and clothing.

IDoA awards *GRG* grants to non-profit organizations to provide referral services. Grants support local resources such as legal assistance to secure guardianship, establish custody and back up plans when the grandparents are no longer able to provide care; therapeutic help for children who have lost a parent or significant caregiver through death, divorce or abandonment; advocacy and mentoring; counseling; and respite care.

During this fiscal year (2013), \$300,000 in grants will be awarded to support groups and fund initiatives addressing the needs of *GRG* (and kinship families) in Illinois. The amount is up from the \$242,000 awarded in FY2012.

For more information about *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*, including a list of agencies offering services, visit www.state.il.us/aging or call the Senior HelpLine at 800-252-8966 (for hearing impaired 888-206-1327.)